

**A PLACE TO CALL HOME**  
**Refugee Week**  
**15-22 June**

*Who is a Refugee?*

Any person who has been forced against their will to leave their own country from fear of persecution due to their race, political or religious beliefs, nationality or membership of a particular social group. These people cannot return home unless the conditions that forced them to leave are changed for the better.

*About the week*

Refugee Week is a time to acknowledge and celebrate the contribution that refugees make to Australian society. This year's theme has many aspects and facets. The feeling of being home provides security. As a secure base, home is the certainty that you have a place to return to. Home shapes our identity. Therefore everybody needs a home, a place to identify with.

*The situation in Australia*

People seek refuge in Australia in one of two ways: through the Refugee and Special Humanitarian Program; or as asylum seekers.

*Asylum seekers* are people who have applied for protection and are awaiting a determination of their status. Not all asylum seekers will be determined to be refugees. *Refugees* are people who have been determined by the Australian Government as meeting the criteria for the granting of refugee status.

Like 2006-2007, there are 13,000 new places for 2007-2008. The focus for 2007-2008 has been on the Middle East (35%), Asia (35%) and Africa (30%).

*What can you do?*

Celebrate what refugees have added to your community and promote awareness of the refugee issues, such as focusing on the fundamental right to a secure place to call home. Talk to a refugee family in the parish or community, listen to their story over a cup of tea. Refugee Week encourages Australians to think about our common obligations to people who have no secure home, as well as to acknowledge the 700,000 refugees and humanitarian migrants over the past 60 years who have made Australia their home.

For more information [www.refugeecouncil.org.au](http://www.refugeecouncil.org.au)

*Refugee camp in your city (August and September):*

Medicins Sans Frontieres Australia is launching the first Australian tour of Refugee Camp in Your City (*CANBERRA, QLD and SYD*), a recreation of a refugee camp and its facilities. It is open to the public.

For information [www.msf.org.au/refugeecamp](http://www.msf.org.au/refugeecamp)

Further information will be given closer to the date with day trips being arranged for those Friars interested.

*Freed of all fear by the poverty they have chosen and joyfully living in the hope that is based on the promise, while also promoting mutual acceptance and benevolence among men and women, the friars are to be instruments of the reconciliation that has been brought about by the cross of Jesus Christ. (GG.CC. 70).*

Lost in the tempests out on the open seas, our small boats drift.  
We seek for land during endless days and endless nights.

We are the foam, floating on the vast ocean.  
We are the dust, wandering in endless space.  
Our cries are lost in the howling wind.

Without food, without water, our children lie exhausted until they cry no more.  
We thirst for our land, but are turned back from every shore.

Our distress signals rise and rise again, but passing ships do not stop.  
How many boats have perished?  
How many families lie beneath the waves?

Lord Jesus, do you hear the prayer of our flesh?  
Lord, do you hear our voice from the abyss of death?

O solid shore, we long for you!  
We pray for humankind to be present today!  
We pray that hope be given us today, from any land.  
Amen.

*(The Prayer of the Refugee, Jesuit Relief Services Australia)*